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Letter dated 5 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the latest grievous act of Palestinian terrorism directed against the citizens of Israel.

Shortly after 7.15 a.m. (local time) this morning, a Palestinian suicide terrorist, driving a car packed with explosives, pulled up alongside a public Israeli bus near the northern town of Afula and blew himself up. The explosion of the car triggered a second explosion in the gasoline tank of the bus, the force of which lifted the bus into the air and reduced it to a mass of burned metal. Emergency workers were hindered in their rescue operations due to intelligence reports that terrorists were planning to detonate a second explosion targeting humanitarian workers, as has been done in the past. As of this writing, 16 Israelis have died in the blast and over 30 have been injured, many of them seriously. The terrorist organization Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the blast.

This incident is the latest in the continuing campaign of Palestinian terrorism that has been detailed in our numerous letters since the onset of this campaign in September 2000.

The Government of Israel holds the Palestinian Authority and its Chairman fully responsible for these incidents. The Palestinian leadership continues to lend financial and moral support to terrorist organizations, incite its people to violence and terror, collude with known terrorists and permit terrorist operatives to operate freely in its territory, despite its signed commitment to adopt a policy of zero tolerance for any and all acts of Palestinian terrorism directed against Israeli civilians. Following this latest attack, Israel still awaits action from the Palestinian leadership signalling that its condemnations of terror are more than mere rhetoric designed to appease international audiences.

Unfortunately, recent actions by the Palestinian Authority suggest that its policy of duplicity — whereby it condemns terror while continuing to support efforts of Palestinian terrorist groups to kill and injure Israeli civilians — has yet to be abandoned. In recent days, Chairman Arafat has taken the unimaginable step of inviting the terrorist groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad to join his Cabinet. These

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groups are both internationally recognized as terrorist organizations that are responsible for the deliberate murder of hundreds of Israeli civilians over the years. Even today, both groups remain opposed to any peaceful settlement of the conflict and have repeatedly issued public declarations of their commitment to the mass murder of Israeli civilians. How is Israel to interpret such an invitation? What options are available to us when Chairman Arafat not only fails to fight terror, but also invites its leading proponents to join his Government?

Israel's commitment to achieving a peaceful settlement of our conflict with the Palestinian people is irrevocable, but so is its right and duty to protect the lives of its citizens. Israel will not stand idly by as a continuing campaign of violence and terrorism, including the spate of attacks in the last two weeks, supported both financially and ideologically by the highest echelons of the Palestinian Authority, continues to target innocent Israeli civilians for murder. Nor will Israel ignore the indisputable fact that those with whom we are called upon to make peace are openly colluding with known terrorists in blatant defiance of the will of the international community. The international community must not ignore this fact either. Rather, it must bring full pressure to bear to ensure that the Palestinian Authority takes genuine and immediate action to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in the territory under its control, in accordance with the provisions of international law and its own signed commitments. These actions must include the immediate and verifiable arrest and prosecution of terrorist operatives, who continue to this day to roam freely in Palestinian territory; the confiscation of illegal weapons; and an end to incitement and glorification of suicide bombers as martyrs rather than murderers.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative